7/3/72

Dear Dick,

Howard is in a very bad situation and I fear the pressures upon him and their consequences. He is badly torn and a number, pre-eminently Sylvia, are really leaning on him. There is a line and not always clear line I will not cross because it involves preserving his confidence. I regret he has stipulated it, for I would like to tell you more. The enclosed letter to ~~Ted~~ Teddy Kennedy bears on the situation. What is also involved is the cause of my breaking relations with Gary and Jerry, both hurting is much, Gary in particular. Jerry alone has responded and his "explanation" makes him look worse, the deliberateness of the crookedness explicit as it involves everyone nebroiled in the miserableness, and to this limited degree is helpful to Howard, who had not yet received the letter when he last wrote me. Jerry, not I, sent him the copy. Howard will not need the copy of my reply to understand more fully and well enough. This, however, will add to the complications of his unenviable position.

We alone is the one to engaged in the dialogue I solicited long ago, in anticipation of what now impends. He agreed with my position and analysis, but felt he had to consider other responsibilities he had to assume. He informed me of this after the fact and I have not argued with him. Of course, it was not possible to address any of this or his situation without, in effect, arguing some, but he correctly understands I was not and understands I am sincere in saying that he must do what he considers right, that if he does do what at any time seems right he has the only protection his conscience and integrity can have. My own belief is that not I but those who have made themselves my enemies (please consider that this may not be a personalization coming from pique or ego, and I am certain that in time Howard will confirm the formulation to you) will force his to change his position, if they have not already done it without communicating it to me. I haven't heard from him in several days. Couldn't have with the weekend holiday.

No matter what happens, not matter what his final decision and position, he is already in a bad way and there is no reason not to anticipate that before this reaches its end he will be more distressed. I have spent much time trying to be of help on this, trying to help him think, to understand that he has no real influence on the events or their ultimate potential, that none of us really can do more than influence the degree of harm possible, and that the one consideration he should not have in mind is that of guilt. There are several ways this is possible. One is that he knows the damage to us and our work and its great cost. Here his feeling for us is involved. (I have assured him that as long as he does what he thinks is right, and we are sure he will, whatever he does will not influence our warm feeling for him.) Another is because he has been silent with us when he was aware of what was being done against us. I have told him I know about it, and that is the truth, except for Gary and Jerry. Probably most important is the thing itself. How brilliant and gifted as Howard is, he has had only a limited experience with the seamier sides of life. I have suggested that where he is troubled he should counsel with his father who, while knowing little of the fact, has had longer experience with people. I have suggested that if this does not satisfy him, to counsel with you. Thus the purpose of this letter is to prepare you, to the degree possible without prejudicing you. What details you may need, he can give.

Today's Post does not give the names of any but the two Texans involved in the munitions arrests of yesterday. Unless there are exceptional stories there, don't send copies, but do let me know if the Cubans are identified in case I don't get the names from other sources. I can't now tell you all, but there is a prima facie possibility that Hunt or the Watergate Caper, who I believe to be Frank Bender, could have been one who interfered with the early commercial possibilities of WHITEWASH. It figures, too, in you recall what it said of LHO... Nothing new from N.O. I had expected things I have not gotten. Nothing good new here. Will you be coming down this summer? I want you to see bass swimming parallel with people and on the surface and stopping at a certain point before people get there. And I have one enormous catfish left if you'd like him and nobody has gotten him by the time you'd come. Must be a channel cat. I still have the new Gamemaster .35 if you decide you'd like it, payment to be when possible. And although it would have to be entirely in confidence, you know nothing of what I regard as a sensational trip Thanksgiving time (except for what you have seen in the Epilogue to PM). Best,